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NEWSBYTES

National D-Day Museum celebrates grand opening

KELLY AIR FORCE BASE, Texas – World War II veterans will get some well-deserved recognition as the Department of Defense helps celebrate the grand opening of the National D-Day Museum June 3-6 in New Orleans

The National D-Day Museum is designed to tell the story of veterans who fought in World War II. It will honor the courage, optimism and teamwork of the men and women who won the war, and promote the exploration and expression of these values for future generations.

Checks not related to travel card business

Military finance officials say that recent mailings by Bank of America's Military Banking Division are not related to the government travel card.

The bank has sent credit card mailers to customers of its "Military Bank." However, according to finance officials, this mailing is not related to the travel card contract in any way.

Air Force receives first T-6A Texan II trainer

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) – Joint specialized undergraduate pilot training took on a new look May 23 as the Air Force received the first operational T-6A Texan II. The T-6A will replace the Air Force and Navy's aging fleets of primary trainers. Produced by Raytheon Aircraft Co., the T-6A will be used to train entry-level Air Force and Navy aviation students.

Retention initiatives address airmen's key concerns

By Tech. Sgt. R.R. Getsy
Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – The Air Force is continuing its "war" on retention challenges by responding to concerns from the field on issues ranging from better communication from the top to retraining and TRICARE.

Using feedback from focus groups across the Air Force, a retention summit culled 19 initiatives from an initial pool of 89.

"The summit, which first met in January, identified 89 initiatives. We then held focus groups at 11 bases stateside and in Europe addressing these and other general issues," said Lt. Col. Jan Middleton, chief of retention policy, personnel.

Another summit took place in April and, based on feedback from the focus groups, the top initiatives were briefed to senior Air

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The Air Force is continuing its "war" on retention challenges by responding to concerns from airmen in the field on issues ranging from TRICARE, to spouse employment, retraining and the need for better communication from leadership. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Career assistance advisors will fill information void

By Tech. Sgt. R.R. Getsy
Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – For airmen facing uncertainty about their career options or who are undecided about whether to re-enlist, help will soon be just a phone call away.

Air Force leaders have approved an initiative recommended by a Retention Summit held in April to establish full-time career assistance advisors at each base, according to Lt. Col. Jan Middleton, chief of retention policy, Personnel.

"There are many airmen who are unaware

about all the options and benefits available to them when they are faced with the decision to reenlist, get out, or transfer to the Guard or Reserve, she said.

"For the last couple of years, there was a lot of feedback from the field to bring back the base career advisors," she said, "that's what we kept hearing."

"A few years ago, when they took away the base career advisors, the duties fell to the supervisors to counsel their folks and make sure they were aware of their benefits and

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Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S.

Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newsletter/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

Thanks for noticing our efforts

I just want to thank you for including Lt. Col. Thomas Breen's commentary ("Air Force leaders are getting younger every year" May 24). It's refreshing for junior noncommissioned officers and airmen to see someone at the top looking down and realizing the value of our dedication. The Air Force is a stronger force because of us and I'm glad to see we are being noticed. One of my first lessons as a young maintainer was that maintenance is a thankless job. We understand this but will never turn down a well-deserved pat on the back. Thanks again for the story.

Staff Sgt. Jody Hoefs
Maxwell AFB, Ala.

Commentary hits home

Just wanted to pass on how right Lt. Col. Thomas Breen is in commentary "Air Force leaders are getting younger every year," (May 24). As an F-16 commander at Moody for the last couple of years, I have seen a lot of the same

things he discussed. Just wanted to say thanks and let him know he is right on the mark!

Lt. Col. Lennie Coleman
Moody AFB, Ga.

CAP offers recruiting avenues

I've been reading accounts of the Air Force's attempts to improve recruiting, using various approaches such as massive increases in media advertising, and getting retired people to help man recruiting offices ... Has anyone considered the potential for the Civil Air Patrol to assist in this goal? The CAP trains cadets and promotes the Air Force as an ongoing theme, but in all of the information that I have come across, there is no mention of CAP. ... Bear in mind, there are a lot of young people in the pipeline for an Air Force career, who view these pages. Links to CAP, the official civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, will contribute to our recruiting success.

Senior Master Sgt. Allan Woods
USAF, retired

Leadership starts with communication

By Senior Master Sgt. David D. Crothers
RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom

I've progressed through my career with help from some fantastic supervisors. Most of them were true professionals, who took time to groom, mentor and educate me so I could grow in my chosen profession. I learned valuable lessons from each and every supervisor. One of these supervisors stands out as having taught me more than any other.

This individual was worried about one person, the one he saw in the mirror every day. I did my duties as I thought they should be done. Every task he assigned I attacked with enthusiasm. But at the end of it all, I was clueless as to whether I had accomplished things in the manner he wanted. I asked for feedback and guidance, but never received it.

When he finally got permanent change of station orders, I was asked to present a plaque to him. I was concerned about what I would say. I wasn't about to lie, and I didn't want to offend him, so I decided to thank him. I stood up and thanked him for all the things he taught me, how he had single-handedly taught me more than any supervisor I ever had. It wasn't a lie. He taught me more about what a bad supervisor is than anyone I've ever met. He taught me what

Supervising

kind of supervisor not to be.

A short time after this, the Air Force instituted the Performance Feedback System. One of the reasons it was instituted was because many enlisted members said they had no idea or were unaware of performance problems until after receiving an Enlisted Performance Report. Unfortunately, we still hear the same statements today. Then, as now, the real problem is simply a lack of honest, effective communication between supervisors and subordinates.

Communication is not as simple as many people like to think. Normal day-to-day communication is easily transmitted and received, but often does not occur. When a difficult or stressful topic is addressed, communication is often watered down or avoided altogether. Many people would rather avoid the situation than confront it. Withholding the necessary feedback causes resentment and does nothing to alleviate the problem.

Most people want to do a good job. By providing effective feedback on their performance, a supervisor can guide them to a higher level of performance. I would think

that all supervisors would desperately want to help an individual raise their performance and potential. Everyone would rather work in a section where all people get along and produce at an optimum level.

To achieve the optimum level, you must explain what the requirements, expectations and goals are and how the individual is accomplishing them. Depending on the individual, these items may need to be explained in great detail. Break each goal down and explain how they are to be accomplished and why. I have found that the "why" is often crucial to gaining true acceptance. When people understand why something has to be done, they are usually better motivated to do it.

Providing honest feedback is crucial to achieving mission success. We need to remember that most people really want to do a good job, and the better they understand what the goals are and how to carry them out, the more effective they will become. Also remember that as a supervisor, you are always teaching subordinates something whether you realize it or not. Ask yourself what kinds of things people are learning from you!

(Editor's note: Sergeant Crothers is assigned to the 352nd Maintenance Squadron.)



Advisors assist patients with healthcare concerns

By Staff Sgt. A.J. Bosker

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – To better address concerns and questions about healthcare, military health officials are working to make Air Force people more aware of patient advocacy resources.



To assist patients with questions or concerns, the Air Force Surgeon General established beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinators at all TRICARE lead agents and Air Force military treatment facilities. (U.S. Air Force photo)

“For decades, we have had health benefits advisors whose job is to help patients,” said Lt. Col. Ed LeBlanc, deputy chief of health benefits and policy, Air Force Surgeon General. “They may be called by different names at different facilities, but their function is basically the same – help patients resolve their problems or concerns.”

“We discovered the problem is people are not aware of who they are or how to contact them. We need to get the word out and make sure people know there is a system to help them and how to access it,” said Maj. Jon Rychalski, operations officer in the Air Force Surgeon General’s Medical Programs and Resources Directorate.

Formalizing customer service programs into a single patient advocacy program, the military health system established a single position – the beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator – at all TRICARE lead agents and MTFs.

This article is available in its entirety online.

Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman releases ‘Joint Vision 2020’

WASHINGTON – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry H. Shelton released “Joint Vision 2020” May 30.

JV2020 is a document that extends, refines, and builds on “Joint Vision 2010” in projecting how the U.S. military must be developed and transformed in the new millennium.

The focus of JV2020 remains a joint force capable of full spectrum dominance, persuasive in peace, decisive in war, and preeminent in any form of conflict. Four operational concepts – dominant maneuver, precision engagement, focused logistics, and full dimensional protection – that the military must apply to achieve full spectrum dominance were introduced in JV2010 and continue as the foundation of JV2020.

The new document focuses on three factors as central to success in these four operational concepts and the resulting capability of full-spectrum dominance:

Interoperability: Success across the full range of military operations requires interoperability among the joint force, multinational partners, and the interagency.

Innovation: Broad-based innovation is the key to transforming the capabilities of the joint force.

Decision Superiority: Information superiority will enable joint command and control to be transformed so our commanders can make better and faster decisions than their opponents. JV2020 is available at <http://www.dtic.mil/jv2020>.

Retention initiatives address airmen’s concerns

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Force leadership earlier this month.

“We are extremely pleased with the work of the two summits. They came in ready to make a positive difference for our men and women and I believe they did,” said Lt. Gen. Donald L. Peterson, Air Force deputy chief of staff for personnel. “The Air Force members and their families who participated in our focus groups provided great feedback and the summit participants focused their efforts on what our folks said they needed as well as what could make the biggest impact.”

“We learned people were primarily concerned about issues such as TRICARE, spouse employment, retraining, and lack of communication from leadership,” Colonel Middleton said.

“One of the complaints from people in the field is ‘we don’t know what’s going on – tell us the truth,’” she said.

She said this perception is one the Air Force hopes to overcome with enhanced communication from the top down.

“The overarching theme throughout this whole process is communication,” she said. The field needs to know what’s going on and why. Communication is a top initiative, the colonel said.

“One way we are addressing this is through doing a better job of providing commanders information that can then be relayed to the troops,” she said. “We’re finding that many commanders don’t know how to get to the available information. We need to make it more accessible to them by way of commander’s call topics and other sources.”

Another initiative she believes will help improve the flow of communication is the retention toolkit.

“This is a major initiative which will basically be a one-stop source for people to access the latest and greatest on retention information,” Colonel Middleton explained.

The toolkit will be an online service, maintained by the Retention Operations Office at the Air Force Personnel Center. “It will be a place for commanders, supervisors and career assistance advisors to get the latest retention information for their people,” she said.

This article is available in its entirety online.



Career Focus Program helps military spouses

FSC program assists with employment

By Staff Sgt. A.J. Bosker

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – The Air Force Career Focus Program, a family support center service, is designed to assist military spouses with employment opportunities, according to Shontelle Rivers, chief of Family Policy and Financial Programs, Air Force Family Matters, Headquarters Air Force.

The Career Focus Program, offered at all bases, provides family members with the skills necessary to confidently search for meaningful employment and make informed career decisions, Ms. Rivers said. "We take a lot of pride in empowering our spouses to market themselves and establish formal careers in all fields.

"Our employment programs can also help those interested in part-time or non-traditional career-oriented employment," she said. "We do post jobs and are well connected in the communities." Many family support centers offer employment resource libraries that

include a job bank – either hard copy listings or Internet job postings – to assist spouses in their search for employment.

"Our certified counselors, by conducting a formal assessment and career interest inventories, help people find out what they want to do and how they would like to go about doing it," Ms. Rivers said.

"We work with the spouses to teach them what they need to know in order to successfully search for employment," she said. "Our FSCs conduct self-interest surveys, provide workshops and information referral and counseling services which offer spouses tips on career planning, professional dressing, salary negotiation, resume writing and applying for federal jobs. We even offer some self-esteem counseling."

There are also plans underway to expand the program, she said.

"We are working to establish a partnership with civilian personnel to develop a training program for spouses to learn how to use the automated process to apply for federal employment," Ms. Rivers said.

This article is available in its entirety online.

Program assists spouses with professional careers

By Staff Sgt. A.J. Bosker

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – Military spouses with professional careers are at a disadvantage in advancing up the career ladder because of frequent and sometimes unpredictable military relocations, said Shontelle Rivers, chief of Family Policy and Financial Programs, Air Force Family Matters, Headquarters Air Force.

To overcome this obstacle, the Air Force is establishing the Professional and Executive Employment Resource Services as part of its Career Focus Program.

According to Ms. Rivers, PEERS is designed to assist spouses with mid- to senior-level professional or executive experience in finding commensurate employment.

This article is available in its entirety online.

Base at home with EAF concept

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. – The Gunfighters of Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, begin their first on-call period June 1 as part of the expeditionary aerospace force.

The 366th Wing has a unique role in the EAF. They are one of only two aerospace expeditionary wings. The other is the 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C., which recently completed its first on-call period.

So, what's the difference between an AEW and an aerospace expeditionary force?

The key difference is an AEW is tasked to deploy at a moment's notice to any crisis

worldwide and rotate on alternate 90-day on-call periods.

An AEW fulfills steady-state deployments such as Operations Southern/Northern Watch or peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia and rotates on 90-day on-call periods every 15 months.

To alleviate some of the stresses that can be associated with a constant 90-on, 90-off rotation period, the two AEWs will shift to a 120-day on/off cycle beginning in December, allowing for more stability.

This article is available in its entirety online.

Career assistance advisors will fill information void

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options. But then, that's when things got pretty busy with the increased operations tempo and the force draw down," Colonel Middleton pointed out, "and the supervisors often didn't have time to fill that void.

"So, we've decided to bring in a similar position – not the same as the base career advisor – since the career assistance advisors will focus on more than just retention issues, per se," the colonel said.

This article is available in its entirety online.



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